

**Kola's Ridge Thinning
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-98-12**

Prepared: June 21, 2001

Decision Documentation

Decision: It is my decision to implement Alternative 2 of the EA, and authorize the commercial thinning of 52 acres located in Section 27, T. 30 S., R. 9 W., W.M. (map attached). These stands are allocated as General Forest Management Area. The volume to be offered is 913 MBF, equivalent to 1,654 CCF. It is anticipated that some additional volume will be modified into the sale as a result of the cutting of tail, guyline, and corridor trees.

The environmental assessment (EA) analyzed the proposed thinning of 67 acres. The establishment of Riparian Reserves on previously unidentified streams reduced this figure to 61 acres. Subsequent reductions were made in the establishment of habitat areas for the Oregon red tree vole (*Arborimus longicaudus*), resulting in the final figure of 52 acres. A single active nest was located in Unit A. The establishment of a 10-acre habitat removed approximately 3 acres of the unit and incorporated it with adjacent Riparian Reserves. Two active nests were identified in Unit C, and protected with a 10-acre habitat area, resulting in the removal of approximately 6 acres from this unit. No botanical Survey and Manage species were identified, for which special management attention or protection is required.

Access will be provided by existing roads and two temporary spur roads. The temporary construction totals 0.12 miles. These temporary roads will be constructed, used and decommissioned in the same operating season. Decommissioning will be accomplished by BLM personnel. Approximately 0.80 miles of Road No. 30-9-27.2 will be renovated. This will consist of widening the road surface and surfacing, the surfacing to be conducted by the BLM following the completion of thinning. Other proposed road renovation addressed in the EA has already been completed by a private party under a reciprocal right-of-way agreement.

In order to reduce the likelihood of the introduction of Port-Orford-cedar root disease or noxious weeds into the project area, pressure washing or steam cleaning of all logging and road building equipment is required prior to being moved into the project area.

Rationale for the Decision:

This decision is based upon the following: The Roseburg District *Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP 1995) identifies the need for commercial thinning of stands under 80 years of age to assure high levels of volume productivity (p. 151). Alternative 2, the proposed alternative, would achieve this objective, whereas, Alternative 1 would not.

Comments on this analysis were received from one individual and four organizations, and considered in the preparation of this decision. None of the comments were determined to constitute issues not already addressed in the EA, or new information that would change the conclusions of the analysis.

The project area is located within the 35-50 mile management zone for the marbled murrelet and located within a ¼ mile of unsurveyed suitable habitat. The BLM conferred with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on this project and a letter of concurrence received on May 31, 2001. The letter (File Name: 1-15-01-1-270) was in response to a BLM request for written concurrence on effects determination for FY 2001-2002 Programmatic Assessments for Activities Not Likely to Adversely Affect Listed Species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred that the action was not likely to adversely affect murrelet habitat because no constituent elements of habitat would be removed, and that the habitat is expected to function as intended. To address the potential effect of noise disturbance, daily operational restrictions will be implemented. These restrictions prohibit the beginning of thinning operations until two (2) hours after sunrise, and require that operations cease two (2) hours before sunset, between the dates of April 1st and August 5th.

The BLM conferred with the National Marine Fisheries Service on this project for potential effects on the Oregon Coast coho salmon and the Oregon Coast steelhead trout. In a letter dated October 7, 1998, the National Marine Fisheries Service concurred with the BLM finding that the thinning was “not likely to adversely affect” these species or any designated critical habitat for the coho salmon, downstream of the project area. The National Marine Fisheries Service concluded that “Due to project location and design, there is not anticipated to be any degradation of habitat indicators and a negligible probability of take . . .”

Compliance and Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done in accordance with the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (pp. 84, 190-191, and 195-198).

Protest and Appeals Procedures: As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 Administrative Remedies under § 5003.3 (a) and (b), protests may be made within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of sale in *The News Review*, Roseburg, Oregon. Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.

E. Dwight Fielder
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date

